

Connecticut Citizens Transportation Lobby

Statement on Congestion Pricing

For The Transportation Committee Public Hearing 2/23/09

CTL, a grass roots coalition dedicated to highway safety and better transit alternatives, strongly supports the installation of congestion pricing on Connecticut highways.

Off-peak pricing is used successfully in services as different as utility rates, theater tickets and air fares. It should be in use on our crowded highways for two reasons: To mitigate traffic congestion and to create revenues to be deposited in a transportation fund. In this way, out-of-state highway users would pay their fair share of maintaining and repairing our roads and bridges.

The tolling procedure is not what it was when a tragic crash at the Stratford tolls led to the elimination of toll booths on our roadways. Today there are many methods used all over the world, from E-Z pass collection to camera-generated bills mailed automatically. All our neighboring states charge Connecticut drivers for the use of their highways. We currently give away travel on our highways and make only our residents pay the huge maintenance and repair costs. According to the FHWA, Connecticut roads are the fifth worst in the nation and one third of our bridges are rated deficient.

Congestion or variable pricing is the system of charging different rates for travel at different hours of the day. Discretionary drivers can be encouraged to eliminate or re-schedule trips from the busiest commuting hours to times when the roadway is less used and they are charged off-peak rates.

We must pay for highway maintenance with creative solutions that recognize new realities. Connecticut citizens should be asked if they prefer a higher gas tax (probably not contributed to in any significant way by out-of-staters purchasing fuel in Connecticut) or the collection from all highway users or tolls based on highway use. We believe they would choose to install congestion pricing.

Carol Leighton, Co-Chair of the Citizens Transportation Lobby